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ABSTRACT

If a program of community study has not been initiated for the school system, the individual teacher should take the initiative in presenting the idea to the administration and in locating and preparing for the use of community resources in the classroom. There are three principal aspects of the discovery and use of community resources (those which provide learning situations in which pupils are exposed to firsthand contact with the places, things, and people in the locality about them): organized community study; planning and conducting field trips; and the identification and use of people as instructional resources. The author offers advice on organizing the use of these resources. (AJ)

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The Teacher and the Use of Community Resources

By: Beryl Ray McKinnerney

Introduction

Community resources refer to those resources which provide learning situations in which pupils are exposed to firsthand contact with the places, things, and people in the locality about them. These resources may take various forms: school trips, excursions, tours, visiting-authority programs, interviews, and other real-life opportunities of learning-by-doing. Brown, Lewis, and Harderoad (1969, p. 390) have shown "...there are three principal aspects of the discovery and use of community resources: organized community study; planning and conducting field trips; and the identification and use of people as instructional resources."

The use of community resources is not a new idea. Pestalozzi and other noted educators expressed their views, concerning learning about the social and natural environment, as experiences which are real, lifelike, and available to the learner for firsthand examination, questioning, and cognition. Although the traditional concept of the classroom has tended to segregate community resources and the classroom, the use of community resources inside and outside the classroom is becoming an aggregate part of the total school program. If educators subscribe to the theory that firsthand experience is a primary source of learning, then certainly the use of community resources is vital to the school program. Wittich and Schuller (1967, p. 227) state that in terms of the pupil's own nature, "...the use of community resources is a less remote and highly interesting way of becoming informed about the social, economic, and physical aspects of his environment than are the more

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conventional means of instruction."

Organized Community Study

Many school boards have devised and adopted policies concerning the use of community resources. Official courses of study and curriculum revisions which emphasize the use of community resources in the teaching program have been adopted. There are several key points resulting from this action by the school administration. According to Brown, Lewis, and Harderoad (1969, p. 390), these key points are recognized as:

> (1) the psychological value of the familiar in the environment, (2) the need for improving the interest of students in what is studied, (3) the short tenure of teachers in small communities, (4) the lack of local knowledge on the part of new teachers, (5) the surprising lack of information of today's student about his own community or region, and (6) the rich storehouses of instructional resources within any community.

Organized community study may be attained in various ways. The school board and administration of the school may develop files concerning people, places, and things to use as resources. The individual teacher may work through the local teacher organizations to initiate a community study program with the cooperation of the school board and administration. One of the most noted community studies is the San Diego Community Educational Resources Project. The purposes of the project were: to reduce the time lag between the development of new knowledge and its availability to the student and teacher; and to identify and organize the community resources.

The San Diego project was conducted by the leaders of the community in conjunction with the educators of the school system. According to Brown, Lewis, and Harderoad (1969, p. 393), the several task-force groups established:

> ...(1) a common area library directory of the more than seventy special libraries in the San Diego region; (2) a special botanical garden containing rare live-plant materials in an organized ecological situation for students and classes to visit and study; (3) a program for making new information available about space, using sound filmstrips, educational films, information pamphlets, and picture sets; (4) a carefully selected set of large study pictures to be studied by groups making field trips to the local zoo, together with a filmstrip to show in preparing classes for these trips; and (5) sets of biology slides from a local United States Navy Hospital for study in biology classes and materials to aid studies of nuclear energy, plasma physics, cryogenics, human communication, oceanographic research, modern medicine, and computers.

Field Trips

If the school system is not financially able to conduct a community study project, the individual teacher should develop a community resource guide. The guide can be made on 3 x 5 inch cards and kept in a handy file. This file is expecially handy in keeping a current list of places to visit on educational fild trips. A copy of the guide should be given to the school administrators for future reference.

The guide should consist of: (1) the names and addresses of the places to which educational field trips can be taken; (2) the names and addresses of resource people who will come to the school or who can be interviewed outside the school; (3) any local require-

ments or details concerning the use of these resources, and (4) any suggestions concerning the planning or conducting of the field trips described. A simple community survey will reveal the business firms which will permit field trips into their establishments. Banks, courts, museums, power plants, zoos, and historic buildings are only a few of the establishments in a local area which offers opportunities for field trips, etc. Dale (1965, p. 88) has shown that "...local and state museums can provide comparable services. Many museums have special collections of models, films, filmstrips, recordings, slides, charts, specimens, exhibits, and special collections for school use."

There are many advantages of educational field trips. Some of these advantages are: (1) real source materials can be studied and concrete evidence obtained; (2) ample opportunities are available for students to develop responsibility, self-discipline, initiative, courtesy, and good human relationships; (3) interest in school work will invariably increase; (4) oral and written expression may be stimulated; and (5) when properly conducted, field trips may help integrate the school subjects.

The field trip must be well planned and executed. In order for the student to learn as much as possible, the field trip must also be properly correlated with a specific learning situation. Haas and Packer (1955, p. 217) indicate a field trip may be used to "...(1) introduce or arouse student interest in a unit of work, (2) give the student specific information or skill training, (3) follow-up or review a teaching job, and (4) inspire a student with

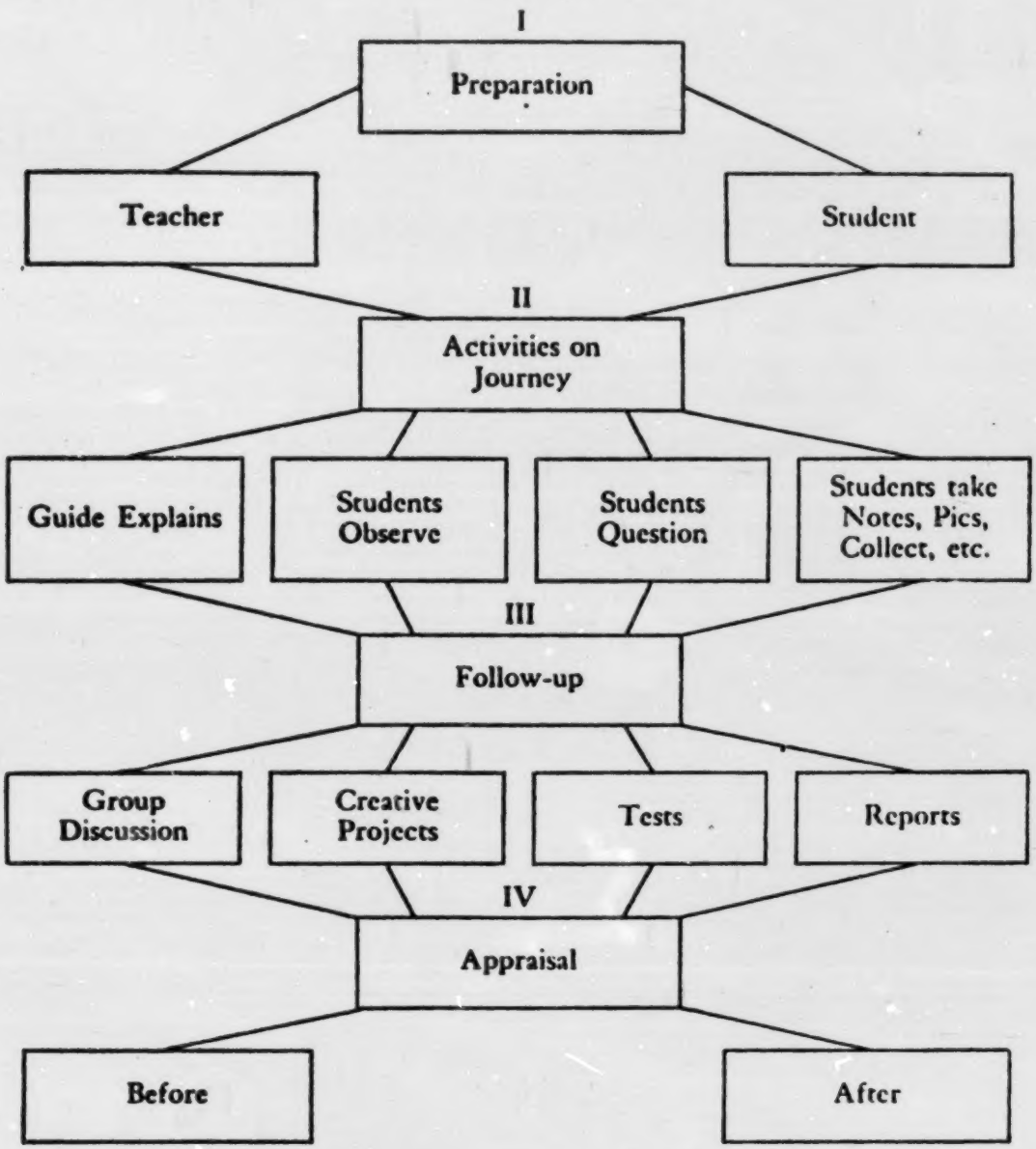
good attitudes."

The field trip (school journey) should consist of four phases: (1) preparation by the teacher and student, (2) activities on the journey, (3) follow-up, and (4) appraisal of the journey. An outline for a school journey is given on page 6. This outline was developed as a teacher's guide by Kinder (1959, p. 493).

A field trip should meet such predetermined criteria as: (1) does the trip fit naturally into the work the students are doing in the classroom; (2) can it be completed in the alloted time; (3) does it have enough value to justify taking considerable class and teacher time; (4) will it provide important observational experience which is unobtainable in other ways; (5) is the trip suitable to the grade level; (6) is the trip one which will arouse student interest; and (7) is it a representative location with general applications. A list of suggested "Do's" for conducting the field trip were listed by Haas and Packer (1955, p. 220) as:

Do avoid spur of the moment trips.
Do survey all trip possibilities in the local area.
Do plan each detail of the trip carefully.
Do use the trip for on-the-job instruction.
Do prepare guide sheets for each trip.
Do make certain the student knows what to observe.
Do make certain the guide knows what he is to show the student.
Do prepare the student before making the trip.
Do be punctual.
Do work in small groups.
Do follow plan as outlined in guide sheet.
Do correlate the trip with the specific problem.
Do prepare flat photographs, slides, or motion pictures of the trip.
Do follow-up trip as soon as possible.
Do test the student.

OUTLINE FOR A SCHOOL JOURNEY



Do use pictures, slides, and motion pictures for review purposes.
Do evaluate and check results of each trip.
Do catalogue and file all trip material for future reference.

The question of teacher liability on field trips is important to the teacher conducting the trip and the school system. If the trip is properly planned and organized, then few problems will arise. In most cases, the liability of the teacher or the representatives of the school board is recognized only when actual negligence is proved.

Resource People

People are one of the most important resources in a program utilizing community resources. Resource people can be used both inside and outside the classroom. Resource people should be used when there is an actual need for their special contribution. Resource people should be brought to the school if possible; however, if the resource person cannot come to the school, a class member or committee may be assigned the task of interviewing him and reporting to the class. For the use of resource people, Brown, Lewis, and Harderoad (1969, p. 400) advise the following basic plan: "...(1) contact the visitor, (2) clarify the purpose of the visit, (3) prepare the class, and (4) arrange the follow-up."

With the increasing use of video taping equipment in the school program, an alternative to asking the resource person to meet five or twenty-five separate classes is to video-tape to the remaining classes. This tape could also be stored for future reference and use. This procedure would greatly simplify scheduling the resource

person's visit. The resource person's schedule would also be simplified in that the presentation would only be given while making the video-tape. A draw-back to this procedure is the "give and take", rated as a valuable part of the presentation, would be missing. The use of the live audience while taping would help alleviate this problem.

The teacher should always take the initiative in planning and evaluating the contributions made by resource people. Wittich and Schuller (1967, p. 243), have shown "...the teacher must be the one to decide when a community-resource experience should be incorporated into the classroom program. He must be the one to invite, to plan with the class in anticipation of the experience, and ultimately to evaluate its success or failure." The use of the resources in the immediate community can provide learning experiences which the teacher, regardless of his broad training, is frequently unable to provide.

Conclusions

Community resources are available to the teacher and the total school program. The use of the resources of the local community can provide firsthand experience for the student. Every community, whether large or small, has an abundance of resources peculiar to that region which will benefit the classroom learning situation.

If a program of community study has not been initiated for the school system, the individual teacher should take the initiative in presenting the idea to the administration of the school system and in locating and preparing for the use of community resources in

the classroom.

The teacher should plan, conduct, evaluate, and follow-up all programs utilizing community resources in the classroom. Proper planning of the learning experience is a must as well as the conducting of the learning experience. The evaluation and follow-up of the use of the community resources in the classroom is the responsibility of the teacher. Good follow-up and evaluation is necessary to identify those resources that are useful to the school program. A community resources guide should be developed and maintained to provide the teachers of the system quick access to a list of all possible learning experiences the local community provides.

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